

verizon

Passport TO CULTURE

Teacher's Resource Guide

SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCE SERIES • SCHOOL YEAR 2010-2011
Grades 5-12

The Spirit of Kwanzaa: Step Afrika!

Kwanzaa events at NJPAC are made possible through the generosity of Leon & Toby Cooperman



Photo: Napoleon Complex Project

Dionne Eleby and Ryan Johnson

just imagine

NJPAC
arts education

Generous support for
Schooltime provided,
in part, by



just imagine

NJPAC

Arts Education and You

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) Arts Education Department presents the 14th season of the *Verizon Passport to Culture SchoolTime Performance Series*.

With *Passport to Culture*, Verizon and NJPAC open up a world of culture to you and your students, offering the best in live performance from a wide diversity of traditions and disciplines. At NJPAC's state-of-the-art facility in Newark, with support from Verizon, the *SchoolTime Performance Series* enriches the lives of New Jersey's students and teachers by inviting them to see, feel, and hear the joy of artistic expression. The exciting roster of productions features outstanding New Jersey companies as well as performers of national and international renown. Meet-the-artist sessions and NJPAC tours are available to expand the arts adventure.



PSEG Foundation

Kid Power!

Through energy efficiency and conservation, kids can help preserve our planet's rich natural resources and promote a healthy environment.

Tip of the Day

The holiday of Kwanzaa was created to foster a sense of community among Africans and people of African descent. All of us—no matter what national origin—are part of a larger community—the Earth's community. You can help conserve the Earth's energy by simply turning off all lights before leaving a room or preserve the environment by participating in cleanup days at parks and beaches.

Made possible through the generosity of the PSEG Foundation.

The *Verizon Passport to Culture SchoolTime Performance Series* is one of many current arts education offerings at NJPAC. Others include:

- Professional Development Workshops that support the use of the arts to enhance classroom curriculum
- Arts Academy school residency programs in dance, theater and literature, and Early Learning Through the Arts—the NJ Wolf Trap Program
- After-school residencies with United Way agencies

In association with statewide arts organizations, educational institutions, and generous funders, the Arts Education Department sponsors the following arts training programs:

- *Wachovia Jazz for Teens*
- The All-State Concerts
- *The Star-Ledger* Scholarship for the Performing Arts
- The Jeffery Carollo Music Scholarship
- Summer Youth Performance Workshop
- Young Artist Institute
- NJPAC/New Jersey Youth Theater Summer Musical Program

Students have the opportunity to audition for admission to NJPAC's arts training programs during NJPAC's annual Young Artist Talent Search.

Detailed information on these programs is available online at njpac.org. Click on Education. The Teacher's Resource Guide and additional activities and resources for each production in the *Verizon Passport to Culture SchoolTime Series* are also online. Click on Education, then on Performances. Scroll down to "Download Teacher Guide in Adobe Acrobat PDF format" and select desired guide.

Permission is granted to copy this Teacher's Resource Guide for classes attending the 2010-2011 Verizon Passport to Culture SchoolTime Performance Series. All other rights reserved.

CONTENTS

On Stage	3
In the Spotlight	4
Dance Talk	5
Kwanzaa: Uniting People of African Descent	6
Before and After Activities	7
Teaching Science Through Dance	7
Delving Deeper	8

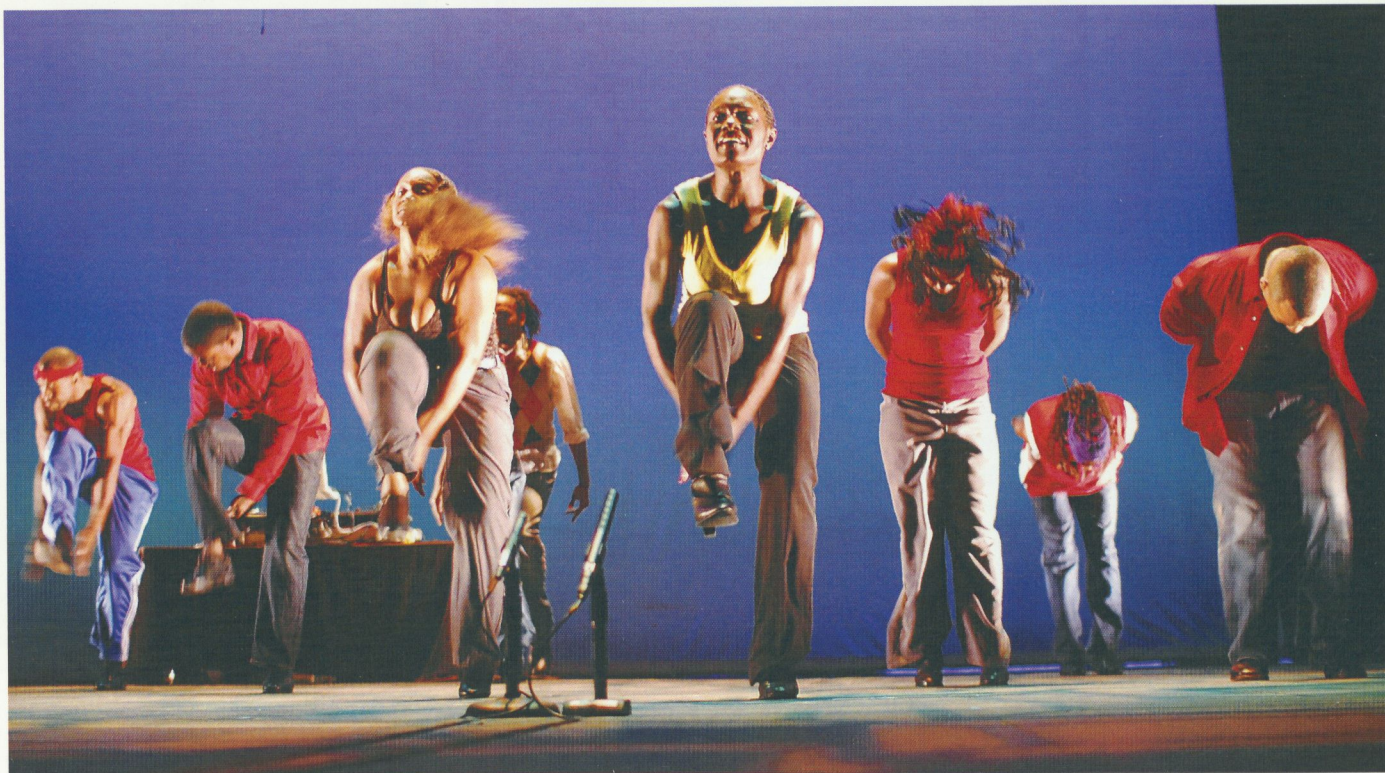
To Teachers and Parents

The resource guide accompanying each performance is designed

- to maximize students' enjoyment and appreciation of the performing arts;
- to extend the impact of the performance by providing discussion ideas, activities, and further reading that promote learning across the curriculum;
- to promote arts literacy by expanding students' knowledge of music, dance, and theater;
- to illustrate that the arts are a legacy reflecting the traditional values, customs, beliefs, expressions, and reflections of a culture;
- to use the arts to teach about the cultures of other people and to celebrate students' own heritage through self-expression;
- to reinforce the New Jersey Department of Education's Core Curriculum Content Standards in the arts.

On Stage

Photo: Napoleon Complex Project



Step Afrika!

In the *Spirit of Kwanzaa*, Step Afrika! performs dances that have been influenced by African tradition. In all the pieces being presented, the dancers use their feet, hands and voices to create exciting rhythms; they play several rhythms at the same time and incorporate call-and-response. Sometimes the dancers perform to drumbeats, but in most of the pieces being presented, the dancers make the music with their bodies.

Tribute, choreographed by Step Afrika's Jakari Sherman, pays tribute to not only the art form of stepping but also to the African-American step show, the venue where tens of thousands of young people, college students and gospel step ministries showcase stepping skills they have honed by months of practice. Stepping is a dance form that combines footsteps, claps and spoken words to produce complicated rhythms. This 90-year-old dance tradition was first created by African-American fraternities and sororities to express pride, love and communal bonds. The step show is this dance tradition's historic platform. Step shows are presented by organizations across rural and urban America.

Tribute touches on many elements that can be seen at a step show including the use of props, ripples and floor work as well as creative formations and impressive rhythms.

Ekhaya (Home) was choreographed by Jackie Semela and members of the Ekhaya Multi Arts Center in South Africa. The drummers in this NJPAC performance are Brian McCollum, Jakari Sherman and Andrew Vinson. Since 1994, American delegates to the Step Afrika! International Cultural Festival have been fascinated by the powerful dance of the Zulu people on which this piece is based. *Ekhaya*, a Zulu word meaning "home," describes Step Afrika's most recent tour of South Africa—a homecoming that marked 15 years of artistic and cultural exchange with South Africa.

Isicathulo is a gumboot dance informed by the work of South African miners. The gumboot dance is a tradition created by South African workers who labored in the oppressive mining industry of then-apartheid South Africa. Isolated from their families for long periods and in need of entertainment, the miners began to

create rhythms with their rubber-soled boots—gumboots—to pass the time. The dance became one of the most popular in South Africa. *Isicathulo*, arranged by Jakari Sherman, was originally choreographed by Jackie Semela, Paul Woodruff and Bongkosi.

Sbbb!, choreographed by Kirsten Ledford and Jeff Johnson, is Step Afrika's classic step work dedicated to members of the African-American Greek-letter organizations (also known as the Divine Nine). The Divine Nine includes the following African-American fraternities and sororities: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.; Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.; Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.; Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.; and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.

Step Afrika's presentation of these visually and musically exciting African and African-influenced dances creates a joyful, lively experience in the true spirit of Kwanzaa.

In the Spotlight

Step Afrika! is the first professional company in the world dedicated to the tradition of stepping. Founded in December 1994, the company is critically acclaimed for its efforts to promote an understanding of and appreciation for stepping and the dance tradition's use as an educational tool for young people worldwide. Step Afrika! reaches tens of thousands of Americans each year and has performed on many stages in North and South America, Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean.

Based in Washington, DC, the company has been featured on CNN, BET, PBS and NPR as well as in numerous books,

documentaries and articles that seek to explore the tradition of stepping. Step Afrika! serves as a cultural ambassador for the United States, representing the nation at events around the world through special invitations from American embassies. Its signature event, the annual Step Afrika International Cultural Festival in Johannesburg, South Africa, is the fruit of a 10-year collaboration with the Soweto Dance Theatre that unites artists from around the world in dialogue and dance performance.

C. Brian Williams (*Founder/Executive Director*) is a native of Houston, TX. Brian first learned to step as a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.—Beta Chapter in 1989. While living in Africa, he began to research stepping and explored the many sides of this exciting, yet under-recognized, art form. In 1994, he founded Step Afrika! Brian has performed, lectured and taught in Europe, South America, Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and throughout the United States. He is co-founder of the Step Afrika! International Cultural Festival in Johannesburg, South Africa, where dancers from different countries come together to dance and learn from each other.

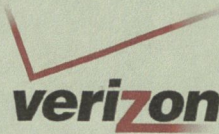
Brian has been cited as a “Civic/Community Visionary” by *Nevada Magazine* and as a “Nation Builder” by the National Black Caucus of State Legislators. He is the recipient of an Artist Fellowship and numerous awards from the DC Commission on Arts & Humanities. He is featured in *Soulstepping*, the first book to document the history of stepping. *Washingtonian Magazine* cited Brian as one of “40 Washingtonians under 40” to watch in the years to come. He also received the 2008 Mayor’s Art Award for Innovation in the Arts and led the company to three Metro DC Dance Awards for “Outstanding New Work,” “Excellence in Stage Design/Multimedia” and “Outstanding Group Performance.”

Information on the other members of the 2010-2011 Step Afrika! troupe can be found online at njpac.org. Click on Education, then on SchoolTime Performances, then on Curriculum Materials. Scroll down to “Download Teacher Guide in Adobe Acrobat PDF format” and select desired guide.

Photo: Napoleon Complex Project



Aseelah Allen



Passport TO CULTURE

Teacher's Resource Guide

SCHOOLTIME PERFORMANCE SERIES • SCHOOL YEAR 2010-2011
Grades 5 - 12

The Spirit of Kwanzaa Step Afrika!

just imagine
NJPAC
arts education

More Activities and Resources

Before the Performance

1. To prepare the students for their visit to NJPAC, familiarize them with Step Afrika! by reading "On Stage" and "In the Spotlight" (p. 3 and p. 4 respectively in the *Teacher's Resource Guide*). Explain Kwanzaa to them by reading the section titled "Kwanzaa - Uniting People of African Descent" (p. 6 in the *Teacher's Resource Guide*). Discuss what dancing and the holidays may mean to each of the students. (1.1, 1.2)*
2. Introduce each of The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa to the students as described in "Kwanzaa - Uniting People of African Descent" (p. 6 in the *Teacher's Resource Guide*). Divide the students into seven groups with each group representing one of the principles. Have each group create its own way of demonstrating what its principle means through dance, art or drama. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3)
3. Traditionally, Africans have revered storytellers and stories. Many of these African and African-American stories can help bring students closer to the meaning of Kwanzaa. Some examples are *Anansi Tales* or the *Adventures of Bre'r Rabbit*. After introducing these and like stories to students, encourage them to write their own stories using any one of The Seven Principles and some terms from "Dance Talk" (p. 5 in the *Teacher's Resource Guide*) as guides. Have them share their stories as a theater piece. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3)
4. Call-and-response, where a solo singer sings words that a group of singers answers, is a common technique used in African and African-American music. The call has one melody and the response has another. Introduce this concept by singing "Thank you" to the students and having them respond by singing "You're welcome." The drummer and the dancer in African dance also have a strong relationship where one responds to the other. Allow students to explore these concepts by working in pairs to create their own call-and-response. Have one student play the role of the drummer and another student play the role of the dancer. The call is through a melody, and the response is through movement, and vice versa. Allow the students to take turns performing each role. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3)
5. Step Afrika! will perform both stepping and gumboot dancing. While the two forms of dance both use foot-stomping, hand-clapping, thigh-slapping, and singing, the footwork in gumboot dancing is often slower and the movements of group members are less uniform. Ask students to watch for similarities and differences between gumboot dancing and stepping. (1.1)

*Number(s) indicate the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standard(s) supported by the activity.

After the Performance

1. Divide the class into small groups to brainstorm and identify at least three elements of dance that they recognized in the performance—including the styles of stepping they saw. (See “Dance Talk,” p. 5 of the *Teacher’s Resource Guide*.) List these elements on the board. Then, ask the groups to demonstrate them. If possible, video tape their performances. (1.1, 1.3)*

2. Discuss how a live performance differs from one on television. Make two lists on the board: one for television viewing and the other for live performance. Discuss the differences and similarities. (1.1, 1.4)

3. Have each student write about his or her own cultural holiday experiences. As homework, ask students to speak with a relative about the dances associated with a holiday that is celebrated in their culture. Encourage them to learn these dances at home. Allot a special time for the presentation of these dances by encouraging a cultural atmosphere with music, dancing, pictures, and singing. (1.1, 1.2, 1.3)

*Number(s) indicate the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standard(s) supported by the activity.

Delving Deeper

Books for Students

Asante, Molefi, and Kariamtu Asante. *African Culture: the Rhythms of Unity*. Africa World Press, 1990.

Emery, Lynne Fauley. *Black Dance from 1619 to Today*. Princeton Book Company, 1988.

Haskinds, James. *Black Dance in America*. Thomas Y. Cromwell Junior Books, 1990.

Haven, Kendall F. *New Years to Kwanzaa: Original Stories of Celebration*. Fulcum Resources, 1999.

Lee, W. *The Dance of Africa: An Introduction*. Prentice Hall, 1972.

Malone, Jacqui. *Steppin’ On the Blues*. University of Illinois Press, 1996.

Riley, Dorothy W. *The Complete Kwanzaa: Celebrating Our Cultural Harvest*. Harper Collins, 1995.

Books for Teachers

Anderson, David A. *Kwanzaa: An Everyday Resource and Instructional Guide*. Brumbaugh and Thomas, 1992.

Holloway, Joseph E., ed. *Africanisms in American Culture*. Indiana University Press, 1990.

Nketia, J.H. Kwabena. *The Music of Africa*. W.W. Norton, 1974.

Paley, Vivian Gussin. *Kwanzaa and Me: A Teacher’s Story*. Harvard University Press, 2000.

CDs

Africa Never Stands Still CD Set. Lark in the Morning Musical Catalog BOA234, 1994.

Roots!! African Drums. National Percussion Group of Kenya. Lark in the Morning Musical Catalog RCD382, n.d.

Videos

Dance Black America. Pennebaker Associates, 1984. (Depicts a four-day festival of African-American dance performances.)

Free to Dance. American Dance Festival, 2001. (Presents the history of African-American dance in the United States.)

Dancing – Program # 5 – “New World, New Forms,” Produced by Thirteen/WNET in association with RM Arts and BBC-TV©, 1993.

Websites

calacademy.org/exhibits/africa/kids.htm - Africa Just for Kids

pbs.org/wonders/Kids/home.htm - PBS Kids’ Africa with Anansi

holidays.net/kwazaa - Holidays

Additional Members of Step Afrika! 2010-2011

Jakari Sherman (*Artistic Director*) is a performer, percussionist and choreographer of stepping with experience in the art form that extends over 15 years. Jakari has served as the artistic director of Step Afrika! for the past three years. He has brought new life to the folkloric tradition of stepping both locally and across the globe. He has also coached and choreographed for numerous community organizations and directed the NBA's first step team. Jakari is founder and director of the non-profit stepping education initiative Ordered Steps which is based in Houston, TX. As a choreographer, he seeks to create a body of work that is experimental and challenging for both the dancer and the audience. Jakari received a Young Artist Grant Award from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities in 2008 and was a 2009 finalist for Outstanding Emerging Artist by the city's prestigious Mayor's Arts Awards. Sherman studied management information systems at the University of Houston and is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Mfonakpan (*Assistant Artistic Director*) has trained extensively in tap, ballet, jazz, modern, and African dance as well as step. While attending the State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook, she majored in biochemistry and cultivated her stepping skills as a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Mfon began her training at the Bernice Johnson Cultural Arts Center in Jamaica, NY and has graced the stages of Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, the Apollo Theater, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Lincoln Center. Mfon recently toured as a stepper and dancer in the off-broadway show *Hoofin' 2 Hittin'*.

Michael Alford, a 2008 graduate of Towson University, earned a BFA in dance performance and education. He received dance training in ballet, jazz and modern dance from the Ailey School, Rock School and Dance Theatre of Harlem. Michael is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

Assata Barton began dancing at the age of two at Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy in Brooklyn, NY. She is a graduate of Fiorello H. La Guardia High School of Music & Art and the Performing Arts in New York City. She has performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and with reggae recording artists Worl-A-Gurl as well as with Jubilation/A Deeply Rooted Productions. Assata is a graduate of Howard University and a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Christopher Briant, from Houston, TX, performed in his first step show in the ninth grade and has been addicted to the stage ever since. His love of dance began while attending Texas A&M University, where he taught hip-hop classes, served as step master for the Potent Pi Omicron Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and earned his BS in agricultural journalism. Chris spent two seasons dancing with Team NRG. He joined Step Afrika! in 2009.

Dionne Eleby is a graduate of Elon University where she majored in musical theater and minored in African-American studies and business administration. A native of Atlanta, GA, Dionne has performed with the African American Dance Ensemble and at Artpark Regional Theatre in northern New York as well as Rotterdam's Lef in Holland. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

D. Anthony Jackson has been a student of the performing arts since childhood. A native of Ohio and graduate of Howard University, he began to study theater and vocal performance at an early age. He discovered dance under the guidance of mentor Terri Brown. Since then, he has studied various dance genres under the likes of Walter Nicks, Katherine Dunham, Lesina Martin, Khadiatou Conte, and Assane Konte. He joined Step Afrika! in 2008.

Ryan Johnson is an accomplished artist who has been performing for more than 10 years with greats such as the late Gregory Hines, Marvin Hamlisch and Donnie McClurkin. As a tap dancer, he has been commissioned by studios across the country to create choreography through workshops and residency programs. Ryan is also the founding director of Raw Sound Tap Company, which he started with the "soul" purpose of teaching, restoring and preserving the history of tap dance. Ryan is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

Shannane E. Johnson graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in Houston, TX, where she became stepping captain of the city champion Mademoiselle Step Team. She was a member of the Houston Rockets G-Force Step Team and is also featured in *Steppin' The Movie*. Shannane holds a BA from Texas A&M University and a MFA from the Florida State University. She is the founder / co-director of The MLES (Mademoiselles) Alumnae, Inc., a Houston-based non-profit organization. Before joining Step Afrika! in 2010, Shannan was an entertainment associate at NBC Universal. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Brian McCollum is a graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. - Alpha Rho Chapter. As an accomplished stepper, Brian has led step teams to national championships and is a featured artist in *The Human Hambone* and *Soul Stepping*. Brian joined Step Afrika! in 2002. He is currently pursuing a Master of Divinity degree at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Joe Murchison is a graduate of Central Oklahoma University where he holds a BA in kinesiology and health science. He has performed with Dallas Black Dance Company and is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

Andrew Vinson, Jr. attended Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina, where he earned a BS in graphic design and computer science with a concentration in business administration. He is a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. - Lambda Gamma chapter. Andrew is also a gifted percussionist in jazz, symphonic and marching band musical styles. Andrew joined Step Afrika! in 2009.

Dance Talk



Photo: Napoleon Complex Project

Step Afrika!

call-and-response - a communication pattern where an individual or group sends forth a message or “call” and another individual or group responds. This pattern is very common in African and African-descended music and dance.

choreographer - the person who creates or invents a dance.

choreography - the process of creating a dance.

energy - the amount of force used in movement that, when varied, changes the quality of the movement.

gesture - the use of motions of the body or limbs as a means of expression or non-verbal communication.

pattern - a design made by dancers in a space to create a visual configuration.

polyrhythms - the simultaneous overlaying of distinct rhythmic patterns that interact to form more complex patterns.

props - items used to create a mood, a setting or a sense of place, or items held or used by the dancers to add to the movement of their bodies.

rhythm - a series of movements or sounds in which some action or element recurs with regularity.

shape - a formation or design created by the dancers with the lines of their bodies.

space - the area that the dancer can reach around his or her body while staying in place, plus the general space through which a dancer travels when dancing.

technique - a style of dance that has its own codified movement language.

tempo/time - a measurable period during which movement, dance or music occurs. Dance makes the passage of time felt by dividing it into anything from complex, rhythmic patterns to periods of long, unbroken stillness.

Did You Know?

Kwanzaa: Uniting People of African Descent

Kwanzaa is a non-religious, African-American holiday that celebrates African culture and values. The holiday, which has grown to be a worldwide phenomenon, was created by Dr. Maulana Karenga, professor and chair of the Black Studies Department of California State University in Long Beach, California. Dr. Karenga established the holiday in 1966 in an effort to revitalize, preserve and promote Pan-African culture and foster a sense of pride and community among Africans and people of African descent around the world. Celebrated from December 26 to January 1, Kwanzaa offers African-descended people a time to be together to rejoice in their heritage. The word Kwanzaa comes from the Swahili phrase "*matunda ya kwanza*" which means "first fruits." Dr. Karenga chose Swahili because of its significance as a Pan-African language.

In order to appreciate the meaning and significance of Kwanzaa, one must understand the *Nguzo Saba* or The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa. The *Nguzo Saba* teaches the fundamental African values that are the building blocks of family, community, tradition, and culture. On each successive evening of the seven-day Kwanzaa celebration, activities, especially in family settings, often focus on one of The Seven Principles.

In addition, one must understand The Symbols of Kwanzaa which also reflect these fundamental values. The symbols are often used in decorating the home or a table for Kwanzaa or in observing rituals associated with the holiday in communal or family settings.

The Nguzo Saba:

The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa

Umoja (Unity) – to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.

Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) – to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves.



A table set with the Symbols of Kwanzaa

Photo: bergolatta.org

Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) – to build and maintain our community together and to make our brother's and sister's problems our problems and solve them together.

Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics) – to build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together.

Nia (Purpose) – to make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

Kuumba (Creativity) – to do always as much as we can, in any way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than when we inherited it.

Imani (faith) – to believe with all our hearts in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

The Symbols of Kwanzaa

Mazao (The Crops) – symbolic of African harvest celebrations and of the rewards of productive and collective labor.

Mkeka (The Mat) – symbolic of our tradition and history and, therefore, the foundation on which we build.

Kinara (The Candle Holder) – symbolic of our roots and of our parent people—continental Africans.

Muhindi (The Corn) – symbolic of our children and our future, which they embody.

Mishumaa Saba (The Seven Candles) – symbolic of the *Nguzo Saba*, the central set of values which African people are urged to live by in order to rescue and reconstruct their lives in their own image and according to their own needs.

Kikombe cha Umoja (The Unity Cup) – symbolic of the foundational principle and practice of unity which makes all else possible.

Zawadi (The Gifts) – symbolic of the labor and love of parents and the commitments made and kept by the children.

Supplemental symbols

Bendera (The Flag) – The colors of the Kwanzaa flag are black for the people, red for their struggle and green for the future and hope that comes from their struggle. It is based on the colors given by the Hon. Marcus Garvey as national colors for African people throughout the world.

Nguzo Saba Poster – a poster depicting The Seven Principles.

In the Classroom

Before the Performance

1. As part of their introduction to the performance, students should be made aware of good theater behavior:

- Watching and listening to the performance without speaking.
- Remaining seated during the entire performance.
- Applauding at appropriate times during and after the performance.

Discuss what is expected of a polite audience member and list the students' responses and suggestions. Make connections with occasions where students have had to conduct themselves in a similar manner. (1.2)*

2. "Why Dance?" is an arts integrated resource of Verizon's Thinkfinity.org. In this lesson, one of a multi-part unit from ARTSEDGE, students identify reasons why people dance. Centers are set up to research various kinds of dance. After exploring three centers, students create a dance, poem, report, or collage to explain why people dance. Artsedge.kennedy-enter.org/content/2319 (1.1, 1.2, 1.3)

After the Performance

1. Ask students to compare and contrast their expectations of the performance with their actual experience. Then, ask them to write a review of the performance by answering the following questions: What parts of the performance did they especially like? Why? What parts did they dislike? Why? Were there any story elements to the dances? What did the dancers and drummers communicate to the audience? What did they communicate to each other? (1.1, 1.3, 1.4)

2. The performers in Step Afrika! use foot-stomping, hand clapping and thigh-slapping to create complicated rhythms. Ask students to think of other sounds dancers can make by moving parts of their bodies. Then, ask the class to choose four favorite sound movements. Have the students practice these sound movements in a sequence until they can perform the sequence several times in a row. This activity can be done in small groups with each group performing in sequence for the class. (1.1, 1.3)

* Number(s) indicate the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standard(s) supported by the activity.

Teaching Science Through Dance (Grades 6-12)

By Sharon J. Sherman, Ed.D.

Dance is a means of self-expression. When used as symbolic language, students can "show what they know" through dance. In the science class, students routinely study environmental issues. Learning about renewable energy is an important topic and one in which students can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through dance.

The Earth's natural resources bring us renewable energy from sources such as sunlight, wind, water, tides, and geothermal heat.

- The sun brings us solar energy. Students may be familiar with using solar energy for heating and cooling homes, cooking or heating water.
- The power of moving air brings us wind energy. Wind farms are common sites in some areas, particularly where the wind is strong and constant.
- The power of moving water from oceans, seas and dams brings us electricity.
- The Earth, itself, brings us geothermal heat which originates deep inside the planet.
- Biomass and biofuel are two additional forms of renewable energy. Biomass is organic material made from living or recently living organisms. Biofuels are a wide range of fuels which are in some way derived from biomass.

Through research, students can learn more about the various sources of renewable energy while honing their information literacy skills. They might research the conditions under which wind energy is best harnessed or identify and map geothermal energy sources. Regardless of the topic, engaging in research is important to those in grades 6-12. Through this process, they learn to recognize when information is needed and where to locate it. Libraries, community resources, special interest organizations, diverse media, and the Internet are good sources of information.

Using dance, students can show what they know about renewable energy by creating short, original choreographic compositions. Present them with a variety of movement problems and ask them to create solutions. For example, you might challenge them to choreograph and perform movement sequences that demonstrate wind energy at work, to interpret the work of the turbine or to use body language to demonstrate steam rising from a geothermal power station. Having the class critique the individual (or group) performances in terms of quality of movement, shape, pathways, rhythm, and tempo adds meaning to the experience.

Sharon J. Sherman, Ed.D. is Dean of the School of Education and Professor of Teacher Education at Rider University in Lawrenceville, NJ.

The Teaching Science Through the Arts content of this guide is made possible through the generous support of Roche.

Additional Before and After activities can be found online at njpac.org. Click on Education, then on Performances, then on Curriculum Materials. Scroll down to "Download Teacher Guide in Adobe Acrobat PDF format" and select desired guide.

Delving Deeper

Books for Students

Drewal, M.T. *Sources of African and African-Related Dance*. American Dance Guild, 1974.

Karenga, Maulana, Dr. *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture*. University of Sankore Press, 1998.

Books for Teachers

Anderson, David A. *Kwanzaa: An Everyday Resource and Instructional Guide*. Brumbs and Thomas, 1992.

Holloway, Joseph E., ed. *Africanisms in American Culture*. Indiana University Press, 1990.

Videos

Dancing Through West Africa. Filmmakers Library, 1986. An award-winning film about Americans, led by African-American choreographer Chuck Davis, who toured West Africa to learn Senegalese dance.

Websites:

kennedy-center.org/education/cuesheets/single_cuesheet.cfm?asset_id=54233 – StepAfrika! is an arts integrated resource of Thinkfinity.org. This cue sheet, a collaboration between U.S. and European artists and South Africa’s Soweto Dance Theatre, explains the high-energy dance of stepping, how it has developed in America and how it relates to other cultures. The cue sheet also provides many activities relating to stepping.

Ko-Thi.org – official website of the Ko-Thi Dance Company

officialkwanzaawebsite.org – Official Kwanzaa website

stepafrika.com – Official website of Step Afrika!

Additional resources can be found online at njpac.org. Click on Education, then on Performances, then on Curriculum Materials. Scroll down to “Download Teacher Guide in Adobe Acrobat PDF format” and select desired guide.

William J. Marino.....	Chairman
Lawrence P. Goldman	President & Chief Executive Officer
Sandra Bowie.....	Vice President of Arts Education
Sanaz Hojreh.....	Assistant Vice President of Arts Education
Uday Joshi.....	Director of Partnerships and Community Programs
Verushka Spirito.....	Associate Director for Performances
Caitlin Evans Jones.....	Director of In-School Programs
Jeff Griglak.....	Director of Arts Training
Natasha Dyer.....	Administrative Assistant/Office Manager for VP & AVP of Arts Education
Laura Ingoglia.....	Editor of Teacher’s Resource Guides

Acknowledgments

as of 8/25/10

NJPAC Arts Education programs are made possible by the generosity of: Bank of America, The Arts Education Endowment Fund in Honor of Raymond G. Chambers, Leon & Toby Cooperman, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, Amy C. Liss, McCrane Foundation, Merck Company Foundation, Albert & Katharine Merck, The Prudential Foundation, The PSEG Foundation, David & Marian Rocker, The Sagner Family Foundation, *The Star-Ledger*/Samuel I. Newhouse Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Verizon, Victoria Foundation, Wachovia and The Women’s Association of NJPAC.

Additional support is provided by: C.R. Bard Foundation, Becton, Dickinson & Company, The Frank and Lydia Bergen Foundation, Allen & Joan Bildner & The Bildner Family Foundation, Bloomberg, Chase, Veronica Goldberg Foundation, Meg & Howard Jacobs, Johnson & Johnson, Marianthi Foundation, The MCJ Amelior Foundation, The New Jersey State Council on the Arts, The George A. Ohl, Jr. Foundation, Panasonic Corporation of North America, Pechter Foundation, PNC Foundation on behalf of the PNC Grow Up Great program, The Provident Bank Foundation, E. Franklin Robbins Charitable Trust, Roche, TD Charitable Foundation, Target, The Turrell Fund, Lucy and Eleanor S. Upton Charitable Foundation, Walmart Foundation and The Blanche M. & George L. Watts Mountainside Community Foundation.

For even more arts integration resources, please go to Thinkfinity.org, the Verizon Foundation’s signature digital learning platform, designed to improve educational and literacy achievement.



One Center Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102
Administration: 973 642-8989
Arts Education Hotline: 973 353-8009
artseducation@njpac.org

NJPAC wishes to thank C. Brian Williams, founder and director of Step Afrika!, for assistance in preparing this guide.

Writers: Charmaine Patricia Warren
Laura Ingoglia
Mary Lou Johnston

Editor: Laura Ingoglia

Design: Pierre Sardain,
66 Creative, Inc.
66Creative.com

NJPAC Guest Reader:
Angela Bowman

NJPAC Teacher’s Resource Guide Review Committee:
Judith Israel
Mary Lou Johnston
Amy Tenzer

Copyright © 2010
New Jersey Performing Arts Center
All Rights Reserved

